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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000887

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: UNVIE AMBASSADOR SCHULTE'S CONSULTATIONS
IN ANKARA

REF: ANKARA 0847 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

¶1. (C) During April 28-29 meetings in Ankara with MFA Undersecretary Apakan, Presidency advisor Turkoglu, PM advisor Davutoglu, Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) president Cakiroglu, six members of parliament, and Turkish General Staff J-5 LTG Zorlu, UNVIE Ambassador Schulte urged continued Turkish support for international efforts to convince the Iranians to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions, as Turkey prepares to assume a seat on the IAEA Board of Governors and aspires to a seat on the UN Security Council in 2009-2010. In meetings with officials as well as academics and opinion leaders, Schulte countered misperceptions about the latest National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), warning that Iran seeks to master enrichment technology and could have a nuclear weapon between 2010 and ¶2015. He also urged officials to declare publicly that Turkey does not seek its own fuel enrichment capacity, while encouraging Turkey to become a member of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). Turkish officials assured Schulte that Turkey shares US concerns, will continue to urge Tehran to accept the P5 1 package, and will implement UN Security Council resolutions while remaining vigilant against attempts to transfer nuclear technology through Turkey. Officials stated that Turkey plans to build three to five nuclear reactors for electricity generation but does not yet have a policy on fuel enrichment. Opinion makers told Schulte that a "grand bargain" between the U.S. and Iran could delay Iran's inevitable attainment of a nuclear capability. Some suggested Turkey would feel compelled to develop its own nuclear weapons in response to Iran's doing so. GOT views on Iranian internal politics and advice on engaging Iran on the P5 1 incentives package are reported reftel. End Summary

GOT's Strong Messages to Tehran

¶2. (C) Schulte reviewed US concerns about developments in Iran's nuclear program, noting President Ahmadinejad's announcement that Iran will set up an additional 6000 centrifuges. Although, according to the IAEA, Iran's existing centrifuges are operating at only 20 percent capacity, Tehran is clearly seeking to master the nuclear fuel cycle. Once it has done so, it could continue enrichment at clandestine sites with no oversight. Schulte countered misinterpretations of the 2007 NIE, stressing that our prognosis remains the same: Iran could have a nuclear weapon between 2010 and 2015. Schulte described IAEA safeguards chief Olli Heinonen's visit to Tehran to

investigate evidence of weaponization, noting that Director General ElBaradei's next report is expected at the end of May. The U.S. is looking for Iran to explain indications of past weaponization activity and to demonstrate transparency in its current activities, to include implementing the Additional Protocol. The international community must maintain a common front against Iran's attempts to sow division.

¶3. (C) Apakan, Turkoglu and Davutoglu assured Schulte in separate meetings that Turkey shares US concerns about Iran's nuclear program and that Turkey had been, and would continue to be, very frank and direct with Tehran about Iran's need to regain the international community's confidence. In high level encounters since 2006, the GOT has encouraged the Iranians to accept the P5 1 package and suspend enrichment, pointing out that continued isolation threatens Iran's own technology base. The GOT's private messages to Iran have been tough, even if Turkey's public statements have appeared milder. At the same time, Turkey has encouraged Syria to distance itself from Iran.

Turkey's Commitment to Non-Proliferation

¶4. (C) Apakan and Turkoglu emphasized the GOT's efforts to implement UNSCRs 1737, 1747, and 1803. In the spirit of those resolutions, Turkey has implemented strict controls on dual use items and is alert to possible transfers of illicit weapons and materials between Iran and Syria. When Iranian-origin weapons bound for Syria were found on a

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derailed train in Turkey on 2007, the GOT duly notified the UN and protested strongly to Iran, Apakan asserted. He and Turkoglu noted, however, that Turkey welcomes one million Iranian tourists each year and that tens of thousands of Turkish trucks must transit Iran enroute to Central Asian trading partners. They asked that pressure also be put on source countries to take effective measures to prevent the export of illicit materials. Asked about the status of Turkey's legal implementation of all three UNSCRs, Turkoglu noted that heavy translation and reporting requirements have made formal implementation a lengthy process, but one which is continuing.

Nuclear Fuel and Energy

¶5. (C) Noting Turkey's interest in nuclear power and the pending US ratification of our bilateral Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy agreement, Schulte asked Turkish officials about the GOT's position on domestic uranium enrichment. Apakan aide MFA Arms Control Deputy Director General Ahmet Gun stated that Turkey has not yet developed a policy on domestic uranium enrichment. In a separate meeting, TAEK president Cakiroglu stated that Turkey has no plans to develop the technology to enrich nuclear fuel, as it is planning to build only 3-5 reactors. Schulte encouraged Turkey to consider foregoing its own enrichment program and to announce that decision publicly to set a positive example and raise confidence in the region. Noting that Turkey is an observer in the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), Schulte urged Turkish officials to consider full membership. He noted that reliable access to nuclear fuel for nuclear energy would be on the IAEA Board of Governors' agenda as Turkey assumes a seat there in the fall of 2008.

Opinion-Makers Views: Iran's Ambitions and Turkey's Response

¶6. (C) An array of Turkish opinion makers agreed that Iran is intent on developing nuclear weapons, whether as an icon around which to maintain the regime's prestige, out of insecurity, or as a means of enhancing Tehran's drive for regional hegemony. Most saw little prospect of thwarting

Iran's goal in the long-term, even if the regime changes, although postponement is possible. Ibrahim Kalin, the head of the SETA policy institute with close ties to the AKP government, stated that the key to any deferral of Iran's nuclear quest is a "grand bargain" between the US and Iran that addresses the nuclear question as well as all other outstanding U.S. - Iran issues. Others echoed this theme, although with little clarity on what such a "grand bargain" should be based. METU international relations professor and TV commentator Huseyin Bagci stated that Turkey can play a helpful role, given its historical experience in the region, but only if it is given the space to engage all parties. He stated that trying to convince Turkey that Iran is an "enemy," as Israel seeks to do, is not an effective approach.

¶7. (C) Several prominent commentators, including secularist ASAM policy institute president and former Turkish ambassador to the US Faruk Logoglu, as well as AKP MP and former German Marshall Fund head Suat Kiniklioglu, suggested that Turkey would be reluctant to cede regional influence to a nuclear-armed Iran and may be compelled to develop its own nuclear weapons in response to Iran doing so. Bilkent international relations chair Mustafa Kibaroglu noted Turkish skepticism of NATO's security guarantee; many Turks perceive NATO did not adequately support Turkey during the first Gulf war and again during Operation Iraqi Freedom, when NATO balked at providing Turkey with missile defense coverage. Others expressed fears that the U.S. is preparing a military strike against Iran, noting that Turkey does not want to jeopardize cooperation with Iran on energy and against PKK terrorism.

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